Dear Tracie Lee & Kenneth McDonald,

I am a faculty member at the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a D-Phil in Environmental History from the University of Oxford. I have served as a member of the inter UC faculty group on World History.

I recently came across a controversy about references related to South Asia in the CA school world history curricula. Upon carefully scrutinizing them, I would like to make the following suggestions for changes in the draft text. In making these changes, I do not endorse any ideology or point of view. Instead, my comments stem from the need to stick to the principle of historical fidelity. This relates to historic usage of terms, including place names, and the need to be very careful to ensure that there is strong evidentiary basis for generalizations. Accordingly, I accept the current text in some instances, and the suggestions by the South Asia faculty, in others, while offering alternatives or compromises in yet others.

I'll be grateful if you could please forward these comments to the members the Instructional Quality Commission commissioners. I am more than happy to serve as an impartial commentator, bringing forth historical evidence from the extent scholarship.

Yours sincerely,

Ravi Rajan

The following are my comments:

1. Comment 2396, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 191, lines 380- 382: The current text is accurate. The suggestion by the South Asia faculty group makes no historical sense because Pakistan did not come in to being until 1947. A compromise could simply be: "the Indus valley in the Indian sub-continent."

2. Comment 2436, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, lines 774: Again, "South Asia" is a modern artifact, an attempt to recognize modern nation state configurations in a geographical region of the world. If the state textbooks decide to adopt the method of organizing based on modern political configurations, it should do so consistently. For example, China should be referred to as East Asia, or as PRC and Taiwan. Ultimately, this makes no historical sense and will lead to an unnecessary redux. I propose the same compromise that I made in comment 1, i.e., use "the Indian sub-continent" instead of "India" or "South Asia." That way, fidelity to history is preserved.

3. Comment 2439, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, line 777: I would like to propose: "the spiritual belief systems of Ancient India." There were many systems, as opposed to one singular religion.

4. Comment 2441, Chapter 10, Gr 6, page 210, line 783: Again, for reasons advanced in Comment 2, I propose retaining consistency and using the phrase: "Indian sub-continent" instead of either "India" or "South Asia."

5. Comment 2454, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 211, lines 811-812: Again, for reasons advanced in Comment 2, I propose retaining consistency and using the phrase: "Indian sub-continent" instead of either "India" or "South Asia."

6. Comment 2459, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 212, lines 819-821: I would like to propose the following changes: "The Indian sub-continent experienced a Vedic period (ca. 1500-500 BCE), named for the Vedas which were composed in Sanskrit. While Sanskrit texts, comprising a wide range of topics, including spiritual, cultural,health, science and technology, continued to be produced in subsequent centuries, texts in Old Tamil also began to appear around 300 BCE, and Tamil literary production flourished during

the Sangam period in South India in following centuries. Sanskrit and Tamil texts passed on for generations through complex oral and written traditions. "

7. Comment 2480, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Pages 212-213, lines 836-837 (bold in original): I would like to propose the following changes: ""Teachers focus students on the question: How did the spiritual traditions of Ancient India support individuals, rulers, and societies?"

Also suggested: "Teachers focus students on the question: How did the spiritual traditions of the Vedas support individuals, rulers, and societies?"

The reason for this suggestion is that the question of commensurability of the concept of religion with the spiritual tenets in the vedas. The concept of religion is sociologically different in the West as compared to the Indian sub-continent in this period. Also see comment 3.

8. Comment 2482, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 213, lines 838-840: I do not see the point in the South Asia faculty group's proposed changes. The current text is accurate. Many sages were indeed not Brahmins.

9. Comment 2501, Chapter 10, Gr 6, Page 214, lines 860-864: I do not see the point in the South Asia faculty group's proposed changes. The current text is accurate. The concept of spiritual diversity did develop during this period. "Hinduism" did not and does not comprise of a single doctrine, but a wide panoply of beliefs and practices, often in critical conversations and disagreements with each other. If there is anything I'd change, it is to replace "religion" with "spiritual."

10. Comment 2502, Chapter 10, Page 214, lines 866-867: I propose the following change: ""Ancient societies of the Indian sub-continent formed into groups, jatis, that emphasized birth as the defining criteria." This change is for consistency. One can't have South Asia in some places and India or Indian in others without good reason. I propose a standard, consistent usage, "Indian sub-continent."

11. Comment 2511, Chapter 10, Page 214, lines 872-874: Both texts -- the current one and the suggested change, are sweeping generalizations. I suggest the following: "A person belonged to a particular varna for a variety of reasons which varied across the geography of the Indian sub-continent over time. These reasons primarily entailed birth, although they also included professional excellence and good conduct."

12. Comment 2536, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 891-892: Both texts are inaccurate and over-generalize. Instead, I suggest the following: ""Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure as well as dogma perpetrated by dominant groups including priests."

13. Comment 2545, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 896-897: Again, both the current text and the proposed revision over-generalize. I propose the following: "They participated in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations. The relative equality between the genders varied from one region of the Indian sub-continent to another, and across time. There were also instances of matriarchy, although this did not necessarily entail equality."

14. Comment 2545, Chapter 10, Page 215, lines 909-910: replace South Asia" with "Indian sub-continent" in the suggested change text.

15. Comment 2593, Chapter 10, Page 235, lines 63-65: replace South Asia" with "Indian sub-continent" in the suggested change text.

16. Comment 2601, Chapter 10, Page 239, lines 145-147: replace South Asia" with "Indian sub-continent" in the suggested change text.

17. Comment 2696, Chapter 10, Page 258, lines 559-560: replace South Asia" with "Indian sub-continent" in the suggested change text.

18. Comment 2706, Chapter 10, Page 260, lines 590-593: There is no hard evidence that sufi saints inspired anyone to convert. Conversion was not their project. They were spiritual seekers, not proselytizers. I propose the following change: "Sufi saints and teachers combined local and Islamic traditions, and inspired common people on the frontier areas of the Muslim world – east Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Indian sub continent."

19. Comment 2730, Chapter 10, Page 265, lines 692-695: The extant texts are both random and haphazard. I propose the following: "Enduring contributions of the cultures and civilizations of the Indian subcontinent to other areas of Afroeurasia include breakthroughs in number theory and, especially, the concept of zero; logical and inferential systems, and linguistic and grammatical theory, the game of chess, the cotton textile industry, the technology of crystalizing sugar, astronomical treatises, the practice of monasticism, and the art, architecture, and performing arts of the Classical Age."

20. Comment 2734, Chapter 10, Page 265, lines 703-704: Again: change "the religion of ancient India" to "the spiritual traditions of ancient India."

21. Comment 2734, Page 265, lines 707-709: Both texts have germs of truth in them. I suggest the following: " The Bhakti movement placed emphasis on social and religious equality and a personal expression of devotion to God in the popular, vernacular languages. It also critiqued the power held by priestly elites."

22. Comment 2740, Page 266, lines 715-717: replace South Asia" with "Indian sub-continent" in the suggested change text.

23. Comment 2748, Page 267, lines 740-742: Again, the SA faculty comment makes no historical sense. I propose simply replacing "India" in the current text, with "the Indian sub-continent."

24. Comment 2813, 11 (gr 7), Page 297, lines 1371-1373 (bold in original): "Next students investigate the question: Why did the Europeans use colonialism to interact with Native Americans and peoples of Africa, and Asia? What were the effects of colonialism on the colonized people?"

25. Comment 2993, 14 (gr 9), Page 405, lines 455-458: The Quran should indeed be added, but the distinction between scriptural and literary texts is hair splitting and un-necessary for this grade.

26. Comment 3192, 15 (Gr 10), Pages 498-499, lines 1484-1487: Both versions are needlessly inflammatory. Instead, I propose the following: "Violence perpetrated in the name of religion all over the world has tended to tear apart societies and civilizations. Those who invoke religion to perpetrate violence often turn inward, turning upon members of their own faith who disagree on some tenets, even whilst attacking those from religions other than their own."

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S. R A V I R A J A N

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.
– Saint Francis of Assisi